

Recommended Workshop Materials List- Laura Poss

- Watercolor paper- 100% cotton rag, cold press, and either 140lb or 300lb. Loose sheets or blocks are preferable to pads of paper, which often have a different finish. Loose sheets are the most versatile and economical. The largest paper we'll need in class is 10 x 14".
- A stretching/backing board, such as gatorboard (Gatorfoam Board) or other hard, non-absorbent surface that you can tape your paper to. Gatorboard has the advantages of being very lightweight, sturdy, and will accept staples if you want to stretch your paper to prevent buckling.
- Masking tape at least 3/4" wide. The cheap, tan, plain masking tape works best for our purposes.
- Kneaded eraser (much kinder to watercolor paper).
- A sketchbook or plain paper for drawing/sketching/notes. What type is a personal preference, but I'd get one with at least 90lb paper so it can handle light watercolor washes.
- 2 water containers for rinsing brushes and supplying clean water for mixing.
- A watercolor palette of some kind with at least one decent-sized flat mixing area and a lid. My favorite is the Robert E. Wood Palette. Some beginners prefer a smaller palette, which is fine, as long as there is at least one flat mixing area and a lid to cover the palette when not in use. For those who prefer a smaller palette, the Jack Richeson Sienna Plein Air 9x12 Palette is a nice choice. There are also some good folding palettes around, but you may grow out of those quickly.
- Brushes- I use mostly round brushes. You need at least a small (about #6), medium (about #10), and large, pointed (at least #14) round brush, and a 1" (or larger) flat brush or large, soft brush (the Winsor Newton synthetic sable round #16 is a good choice for this at a reasonable price). A list of the brushes I use most often and other notes can be found on the next page.
- Paint- Best when sold in tubes, but pans are ok, too. Must be artist grade. Please do not buy or use student grade paints (such as Cotman or Academy); they will disappoint you every time. *Note that color names are often not the same across different brands.*

Paint colors:

For best results, you will have a warm and a cool version of each of the primaries, along with an earth tone or two. Below is a list of color suggestions, but if you already have your own watercolors that you currently use, they should work fine, as long as they are *artist grade* and you have an assortment of hues, especially primaries. My favorite brands are American Journey (AJ), Daniel Smith (DS), Da Vinci (DV), Winsor Newton (WN) (artist colors, not Cotman), and M. Graham (MG)

Note- as of Spring/Summer 2025, Cheap Joe's is closing (soooo sad). American Journey paints may or may not be available. Da Vinci paints are essentially the same and can be substituted for AJ colors.

The colors on my palette that I use most often are ultramarine blue (AJ/DV), cobalt blue (AJ/DV), Joe's or phthalo blue (AJ/DV) (green shade, if applicable), Joe's or Da Vinci red (AJ/DV) (aka. pyrrole red), quinacridone rose (MG), quinacridone gold (DS *only*), hansa yellow medium (DS), hansa yellow deep (DS), burnt sienna (DS) and lamp black (AJ).

I also sometimes use transparent red oxide (DS), pyrrole scarlet, pyrrole crimson (or alizarin crimson), quinacridone violet and/or phthalo green (DS).

Notes on watercolor brushes:

If you are newer to painting—or even if you're not—it can be confusing and overwhelming to choose brushes. Natural hairs (and “synthetic naturals”) are softer and best for holding loads of paint, but are often more expensive and don't keep a point as well. Synthetics usually have more “snap” and hold their points better. It's good to have some of both.

The brushes I use most often are (all rounds): #18 perla, #16 WN synthetic sable, #14 perla, #10 perla, #10 WN Sceptre gold II, and #8 perla

Another note- Escoda brushes (and other European brands) run about one size smaller than their American counterparts.